



# HOUSE BUDGET COMMITTEE

## Democratic Caucus

The Honorable John M. Spratt Jr. ■ Ranking Democratic Member

B-71 Cannon HOB ■ Washington, DC 20515 ■ 202-226-7200 ■ [www.house.gov/budget\\_democrats](http://www.house.gov/budget_democrats)

November 19, 2003

### Waiting for a Republican Omnibus

Dear Democratic Colleague:

It is seven weeks into fiscal year 2004 and the Republican Congress *still* has completed only six of the necessary 13 appropriations bills. At the same time, the 2003 deficit was the largest in American history, and the 2004 deficit is forecast to be even bigger. This budget fiasco is due to Republicans' failure to enact and implement a credible and responsible fiscal plan.

The majority of federal agencies currently are still operating under a short-term continuing resolution set at last year's funding levels. These agencies — the Departments of Education, Veterans' Affairs, Justice, Health and Human Services, State, and Transportation, to name just a few — are struggling to plan their work without knowing their budgets. Even those slated for funding increases by the House or Senate have yet to see a dime of new funding.

Because it has failed to enact the funding bills on time, the Republican leadership now plans to bundle five of the remaining appropriations bills — Agriculture, Labor-HHS-Education, Commerce-Justice-State, VA-HUD, and District of Columbia — into one omnibus conference report. An omnibus requires that Members either vote for cuts they cannot accept, or vote against the funding for much of the government. This is not a prescription for good governing.

Last year, Republicans criticized Senate Democrats for failing to pass a budget or appropriations bills on time. This year, with Republicans controlling both chambers of Congress and the White House, Republicans have no one to blame but themselves for failing to budget. Their failure makes it harder for agencies to plan, and for Americans to plan for their economic safety under record federal budget deficits that risk the future of Social Security and other vital federal resources.

#### Status of 2004 Appropriations

Agriculture	in conference
C - J - S	passed House
Defense	✓
DC	passed House and Senate
Energy	pending signature
Foreign Ops.	in conference
Homeland	✓
Interior	✓
L-HHS-ED	in conference
Leg. Branch	✓
Mil. Con.	pending signature
Trans-Treas.	in conference
VA - HUD	passed House and Senate

Sincerely,

/s

John M. Spratt, Jr.

Ranking Democratic Member